Musical News and Happenings

Recalls Centenary Of Cesar Franck

Willem Mengelberg and his orchesthe birth of one of the most attractive Desert." characters in the history of music. musical circles might have stirred a "temperament" to fury, but Franck took it philosophically, even cheerhard work, spent largely in teaching pupils of all kinds, some promising, many the reverse; a life without any sensational incidents, but always devoted to his music. César Franck was born at Liege, in

Belgium, on December 10, 1822, in a region which Vincent d'Indy finds very like central France in appearance, but "German in customs and surroundings." His family was descended from a line of painters, which explains the composer's considerable talent for drawing. His father, termed by D'Indy man of stern and autocratic character." decided that Cesar and his brother should become professional musicians, and entered him at the Liege Music School. At the age of ten, on a tour of Belgium, César met a famous child-musician only a year older than himself, the singer Pauline the Liege school, and in 1836 the Francks moved to Paris. César entered the Conservatoire in 1837, studying composition and pianeforte, and soon won the award "proxime accessit" for

Signs of the composer's originality appeared in the pianoforte competition of 1848, when, after an excellent performance of Hummel's A Minor Concerto, the young musician conceived the idea of transposing the piece set before him to a key one-third lower, and forthwith did so with equal ease. Hs obviously deserved the first prize, but Cherubini, then at the head of the Conservatoire, was shocked at the innovation and refused to award it, but his father by finishing his examination think it is all right."

He won the first prize for fugue in ject, and the next year, as a pupil of the street. André Benoît, competed for the organ prize. The tests are traditional-devising an accompaniment for plain chant chosen for the occasion, the performance of an organ piece with pedal and the improvisations of a fugue and chosen by the examiners. Here Franck's love of originality found another opportunity, and he treated the subjects simultaneously, a bril lant performance, but its length of development quite bewildered the examiners who at first proposed to award him nothing, but eventually gave him a second prize.

Franck was beginning his preparations for the Prix de Rome, but suddenly, in April, 1842, his father removed him from the Conservatoire and told him to prepare for the career of a virtuese pianist. This, observes D'Indy. was just the period when such pianists were having their greatest vogue, when Liszt and Thalberg, forsinstance, held | the center of the stage in the capitals of Europe. Such careers had dazzled the elder Franck, who was determined on a similar fame for his sons. César returned to Belgium and complied with his father's wishes. In the life which he now was leading there was little opportunity for serious study, but chese two years were not entirely barren. His three tries were dedicated to King Leopold, in the hope that royal recognition would carry the young planist far forward on his road to celebrity. But the King failed to respond, and in 1844 the Francks returned to Paris, taking an apartment on the Rue de la Bruyere.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS



Grand Prize and Gold Medal



tra, the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, marks M. d'indy, "his sole diversion experienced at the time, while a more will give, it is announced, a Cesar was a concert-at rare intervals-at pretentious oratorio of another com-Franck festival concert at Amsterdam which one of his own works was given." poser took most of the time for reand at The Hague on December 7 and 8, His "Biblical ecloque," "Ruth," writ- hearsal. The only one of Franck's in which Eleanor Spencer, the American ten in 1846, had its first performance friends who seemed satisfied was Acolian Hall, Saturday evening, Noplanist, will play the Symphonic Vari- in the concert room of the Conserva- Franck himself. ations which calls attention to the toire, but was condemned as a poor Recognition for his genius was gradapproaching hundredth anniversary of imitation of Felicien David's "Le ually developing. In 1888 he became a of the dramatic incidents that sur-

though he did not begin to win general out of Paris. But such was the time ment was not happy in its dealings with ing in America. recognition until the year before his that Franck chose to get married. His him." But a successful performance of Mme. Glaze, though less than thirtydeath. The neglect and opposition bride was the daughter of a well known his string quartet in 1890 led Franck to two years old, has sung before the shown toward him in reigning French tragedian, a fact which scandalized the observe: "You see, they are beginning crowned heads of Europe during the composer's parents. The idea of mar- at last to understand me." But he period when she was prima donna at musician possessing the traditional rying a "theatrical person"! The wed- could not live to see the full measure the Imperial Opera House of Moscow ding itself, held at the Church of Notre of that understanding; he was struck and Petrograd. Dame de Lorette, where Franck was by the pole of an omnibus in May of behind it. His marriage brought about the Montrouge Cemetery, and, a few his decision to live away from his years later, at Montparnasse. parents, while he had to work even harder than before: but, even in this period of high pressure, he determined to set aside an hour or two every day as "time for thought."

of teaching, with his work as organist on a thirty weeks' concert tour, which and hours set apart for composition, will take her to practically every state was followed by him for many years. in the Union, from the Atlantic to the His fortunes during the next ten years Pacific. Miss Macbeth, in addition, will began slowly to improve. He became also sing in a number of performances organist at the Church of St. Jean-St. with the Chicago Opera toward the end François, and in 1858 was given com- of the season. mand of the new organ in the basilica of Ste. Clotilde.

best part of his life." . . . continues, "we know it well, we who were his pupils, the way up to the thrice-blessed organ loft-a way as steep and difficult as that which the Gospel tells us leads to Paradise, First, having climbed the dark, spiral staircase, lit by an occasional loophole, we suddenly came face to face with a kind of antediluvian monster, a complicated bony structure breathing heavily and irregularly, which on close examination proved to be the vital portion of the organ, worked by a vigorous pair

of bellows. Next we had to descend a narrow steps in pitch darkness, a fatal ordeal to high hats and the finally recognized Franck's performance cause of many a slip to the uninitiby proposing a special award called costi," we found ourselves suspended. Opening the narrow "janua "Grand Prix d'Honneur." This was the only time, according to M. d'iny. in the history of the Conservatoire, church, and the next moment all was that such a prize was ever given. forgotten in the contemplation of that Franck won the second prize for fugue rapt profile and the intellectual brow in the competition of 1839, horrifying from which seemed to flow without and walking out long before the clos-ing order, with all the others still lingered for a moment among the pilstruggling with the questions. The lars of the nave before they ascended elder Franck reproved him for this and died away in the vaulted heights apparent carelessness, but the young of the roof. Franck had, or rather man only smiled, and answered, "I was, the genius of improvisation. In 1880 Liszt left the church in amaze-1840, in spite of an ungrateful set sub-fact, and the next year, as a numit of fact, and the next year, as a numit of hurrying from class

class, he was described by a publisher as "a man always in a hurry, always dressed in black, and who wore his trousers too short." His next ten years were quiet and de-

of a piece in sonata form on themes 1870 inspired his patriotic spirit—he

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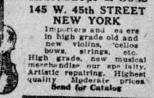
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Amsterdam Festival where they lived on the money earned Frenchman. He wrote an "Ode to tion of "the capacity for taking pains," Paris," inspired by a panegyric in the Paderewski was working out certain Times were hard, and Cesar had to "Figaro," on her gallant resistance, but dynamic and color effects in that devote every minute of the day to it proved to be no time for triumphal phrase and he kept at it until he got teaching, while he managed, neverthe- music. His "Redemption" was pro- what he wanted. less, to find regular time for composi- duced in 1873 at a "Concert Spirituel," tion. He led a life of regular and un- but it proved to be a wretched performceasing industry, during which, re- ance. Colonne, the conductor, was in-

chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

Music Notes

Miss Florence Macbeth, American coloratura soprano of the Chicago This quiet but incessantly busy life Grand Opera Company, has just started

Brune Walter, who will direct three "Here," writes D'Indy, "in the dusk concerts of the New York Symphony Garcia, afterward Mme. Viardot. Two of the organ loft, of which I cannot Orchestra this season, has had the title speak without emotion, he spent the of professor conferred upon him by "Ah," he the Bavarian government.

> Norman Johnston, barytone, will give his first New York recital in Aeolian Hall on Monday afternoon, November 6, at 3 o'clock.

Paderewski has always maintained that one of the secrets of his success was his ability to concentrate.

A visitor at his Swiss home last summer tells of hearing the sound of the piano coming from his study. Naturally he stopped to listen and gradually realized that Paderewski was playing only a phrase of six notes from one of the Chopin etudes. Finally the listener legan to count and when Paderewski went to another phrase he had counted fifty-three repetitions of those six notes. How many times he had played this before the listener began to count no one knows. A remarkable illustra-

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Paris," inspired by a panegyric in the Paderewski was working out certain

Helen Bock, a young American pianist, will play in New York early in

There is a touch of novelty in the coming first American appearance at vember 18, of Mme. Gita Glaze, the Russian prima donna, large'y because rounded her popularity in Russia be Meanwhile, making a living gre- in- not as a composer, but as a "Professor fore the fall of the Romanoffs and Cesar Franck may be considered to creasingly difficult, as the disturbances of Organ." "Decidedly," says D'Indy thereafter her thrilling flight across have led a peaceful, happy life, even of 1848 were driving his richer pupils with indignation, "the French govern- the Russian border and her final land-

She was born to wealth, married to fully. His life was one of continuous organist, was not without its difficul. that year, and, though he kept up his a wealthy cable manufacturer of Tiflis ties. It was February 22, 1848, with busy life, he never fully recovered. In and had before the revolution everythe Revolution in full swing, and, in the autumn he caught pleurisy, and thing that the heart of woman could order to reach the church, the wed- died in November. A modest funeral desire. Mme. Glaze and her husband ding party had to climb a barricade was held in his own church of Ste. were turned out of their beautiful with the willing aid of the insurgents Clotilde, and he was quietly buried in home, their property was confiscated and with only her jewels they were compe'led to flee, making their way to Constantinople and from there coming to America.

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